

High gas prices put a serious dent in our family budgets. When gas prices go up, getting to work or to school is more expensive, and so is everything on our store shelves that moves by truck... and that's everything on our store shelves.

When gas prices climb, our employers feel the strain. Especially in manufacturing and agriculture, thin profit margins get even thinner. Pressure to cut jobs and benefits is directly related to large swings in the price of fuels. Our entire economy suffers.

And when gas prices go up, it is foreign countries halfway around the world that pocket the difference. In Iran, in Saudi Arabia and in Venezuela, the national economy depends on oil exports. When America is not committed to producing our own resources, they are more than willing to finance their entire governments with the proceeds from their energy industries – whether or not their exports actually go to America.

Who could support such madness? The President of the United States and his Secretary of Energy do.

Secretary Stephen Chu told a House of Representatives committee hearing last week that the Energy Department isn't working to lower gasoline prices. This is the same person who in 2008 said that he thought gasoline prices should be as high in America as they are in Europe, where a gallon of gas can exceed ten dollars at the pump.

As an alternative to working to lower gas prices, Secretary Chu is focused on electric vehicles, for starters. That's not the kind of energy policy which will work for Southern Missouri.

Neither is the decision of President Obama to reject the Keystone XL pipeline, which would have brought a major new source of Canadian crude oil into the U.S. for refining. Rejecting the pipeline was a clear signal from the administration that it is not interested in improving the supplies of oil from domestic sources and from our neighbor to the north.

Similarly, the Obama Administration has rejected more leases for exploring oil and natural gas resources off the American coastline. Again, the increase in energy supplies from domestic resources would stabilize prices, make things easier on families and employers, and allow America a secure bridge to new technologies in energy efficiency.

President Obama and Secretary Chu want to skip this crucial step and go straight to an economy in which alternative energy, electric motors and wind and solar sources are the major providers of power. This transition will cause catastrophic disruptions in our economy, and it won't work for farm trucks, heavy machinery or the demands of our manufacturing sector.

All this boils down to what we need to do to create an energy policy that promotes domestic resources, helps create U.S. jobs, and gives us a secure path to energy independence. A U.S. Energy Secretary that accepts high gas prices is dooming America to pain at the pump for years and years to come. As gas prices climb this spring, we need to demand accountability from an administration that doesn't seem to mind.